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ABSTRACT

The position paper examines issues related to serving behaviorally impaired (BI) students in rural areas. Under-identification of BI students in rural areas is noted and possible reasons (such as questions about the adequacy of existing screening procedures) are suggested. Obstacles to service delivery are pointed out, as is the need for a more total therapeutic environment outside the regular classroom for some BI students. Inadequate training for teachers of BI students is cited. Among solutions offered are special training for consulting or resource teachers in rural areas, retraining of indigenous regular class teachers to meet personnel shortages, and use of such innovative teacher education approaches as video and audio broadcasting. Responses by resource and classroom teachers, administrators, and special education faculty conclude the monograph. (CL)

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An Examination of Issues

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Providing Education for Behaviorally
Impaired Students in Rural Areas:
An Examination of Issues

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Wood, F. Developing Guidelines for the Use of Non-traditional Educational Interventions. Chapter 4, 1982.

Zabel, M. K., Identification & Programming for Behaviorally Impaired Preschool Children: Current Procedures & Programs. Chapter 5, 1982.

Vasa, S. Resource Consultant Model for Delivery of Service to Behaviorally Impaired Students in Rural Areas. Chapter 6, 1982.

Zabel, R. H., and Peterson, R. L., Providing Education for Behaviorally Impaired Students in Rural Areas. Chapter 7, 1982.

Rosell, J. Residential Treatment of Behavior Disordered Children Chapter 8, 1982.

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Zabel, R. H., Etiology, Characteristics, and Interventions with Autistic Children: Implications for Delivery of Services. Chapter 10, 1982.

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May, 1982
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Providing Education for Behaviorally Impaired Students
in Rural Areas: An Examination of Issues

Robert H. Zabel, Ph.D.

and

Reece L. Peterson, Ph.D.

Approximately one-third of all children in America attend rural schools. However, it appears that behavior disordered and other handicapped children from rural areas may be greatly underserved. In most urban areas programs for behaviorally impaired/emotionally disturbed students have existed for some time, yet comparable services in rural areas have lagged far behind.

In some areas, such students have not been identified and may not be viewed as a special population requiring specialized services. Certain socio-cultural conditions and attitudes toward behavioral deviance may be involved which affect the recognition of this population. Additionally, certain "practical" considerations are involved, including the financial costs inherent in providing programs for students distributed over vast geographical areas, difficulties in attracting and retaining teachers and ancillary personnel, and in providing appropriate training for teachers of behaviorally impaired students in rural environments.

There has recently been some attention given to the special problems of rural special education (Helge, 1981; Vasa & Steckelberg, 1981; Weatherman, 1975). The National Rural

Research and Personnel Preparation Project (NRP) is an example of efforts to promote rural education for the handicapped. Yet, a recent ERIC search of the literature on the education of behavior disordered students in rural areas identified no relevant publications specifically addressing this topic.

Because of the pressing problems of absent or inadequate programs for behaviorally impaired students in rural areas, the authors propose to (1) discuss some of the major issues involved in incidence and screening, (2) examine the advantages and disadvantages of various service delivery models for behaviorally impaired students in rural settings, and (3) identify possible approaches to service delivery teacher training, selection and retention.

This paper is intended to serve as a position paper to promote discussion among teacher trainers, teachers, special education administrators, and state department of education personnel that may lead to solutions for some of the problems of providing programs in rural areas.

Incidence and Screening

The issues of screening and identification of behaviorally impaired (B.I.) students in rural

areas is one that cannot be totally separated from issues of appropriate service delivery models and professional training. Problems in both of these areas have distinct implications for identification of behaviorally impaired students.

In rural areas B.I. students are under-identified relative to estimates of incidence. Expert opinion, a number of studies, and federal and state guidelines generally acknowledge an incidence figure of 2-3 percent of the school aged population constituting serious problem behavior and in need of special education services (Wood & Zabel, 1978). Data from Nebraska and Kansas, however, indicate considerable under-representation of this population. As Table 1 illustrates, in 1980-81, only about .85 percent of the school aged population was identified as P.S.A. (having personal and social adjustment problems, the Kansas terminology for behavior disorders) in Kansas. The discrepancy was even greater in Nebraska (Table 2) where only .49 percent of the school population was identified as behaviorally impaired.

Furthermore, most of the identified B.I. students in both of these states were found in the major urban areas. In Kansas, 32.8 percent of BI students were found in the three major metropolitan school districts of Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita, yet these districts accounted for only 25.5 percent of Kansas students. In Nebraska, 65.2 percent of all identified behaviorally

impaired students were found in the Omaha and Lincoln districts, yet these districts included only 21.9 percent of the total school population. Similar patterns of prevalence and distribution undoubtedly also exist in other states with large rural areas, indicating not only underidentification of behaviorally impaired students statewide, but particularly wide discrepancies between prevalence in urban and rural areas. How can this phenomenon be explained?

Certainly, no one would argue that every school district must find 2-3 percent of its students severe behavior problems. As Rhodes (1967; 1970) pointed out, the environment as much as the child is involved in any consideration of disturbance. Economic, cultural, familial, and school conditions affect attitudes toward problem behavior. It may be that different types and numbers of students may be perceived as behaviorally impaired in inner city Wichita, in Junction City, or in Hiawatha, Kansas. Exactly what one should expect for prevalence in each of these environments is difficult to say. It may be that fewer children in rural areas present serious emotional and behavioral problems compared with those in urban areas. In a recent article Rutler (1981) examines some of the reasons for differing prevalence rates in rural and urban areas. Sociologists utilizing social disorganization theories relative to deviance have proposed that some disorganized areas of cities not only produce

Table 1

1980-81 Prevalence of P.S.A. Student's in
Kansas by Administrative Units

Educational Service Unit District/Coop	Total School Enrollment	Projected Number of P.S.A. @ 2%	Actual P.S.A. Count Child Count 1980-81	Actual Percent P.S.A.
Atchison	2,380	47.6	45	1.90
Atchison/Jefferson	4,800	96.0	28	0.58
Auburn-Washburn	2,529	50.58	50	1.98
Baldwin	3,100	62	41	1.30
Beloit	3,055	61.1	2	0.06
Clay Center	3,859	77.18	48	1.2
NW Kansas	11,167	223.34	116	1.04
Coldwater	1,400	28	12	0.85
Dodge City	8,418	168.36	28	0.33
El Dorado	9,864	197.28	63	0.64
Emporia	7,500	150	188	2.50
Eskridge	690	13.8	2	0.29
Eureka	915	18.3	1	0.11
Fort Scott	2,056	41.12	65	3.16
Garden City	16,484	329.68	60	0.36
Great Bend	2,862	57.24	20	0.70
Holton	3,670	73.4	12	0.32
Horton-Hiawatha	5,945	109.68	11	0.57
Hutchinson #308	5,484	12.64	28	0.51
Hutchinson #610	5,700	114	33	0.63
Iola	7,442	148.84	36	0.48
Independence	11,610	232.2	15	0.13
Junction City	6,500	130	62	0.95
Kansas City	31,448	628.96	172	0.55
Larned	2,200	44	10	0.45
Lawrence	7,019	140.38	77	1.10
Leavenworth	10,000	200	55	0.55
Lyons	1,979	39.58	6	0.30
Manhattan	3,307	106.14	24	0.45
Marion	2,324	46.48	20	0.86
McPherson	4,200	84	35	0.83
Mulvane	1,828	36.56	36	1.97
Newton	4,379	87.58	134	3.06
Olathe	2,986	119.72	134	0.84
Ottawa	2,100	42	52	2.40
Santa Fe Trail	4,414	88.28	46	1.04
Paola	6,928	138.56	0	0.0
Phillipsburg	5,900	118	16	0.27
Pittsburg	12,722	254.44	129	1.01
Pratt	5,485	109.7	41	0.75
Russell	1,511	30.22	4	0.26
Salina	14,844	296.88	22	0.15
Seaman	3,645	72.9	27	0.74
Seneca	1,516	30.32	12	0.79
Shawnee Heights	3,321	66.42	48	1.44
Silver Lake	659	13.18	1	0.15
St. John	1,073	21.46	3	0.28
St. Marys	1,155	23.1	0	0.0
Topeka	25,959	319.18	622	2.40
Troy	1,605	33.9	0	0.0
Valley Center	8,502	170.04	21	0.02
Wamego	3,600	72	1	0.07
Wellington	3,669	73.38	26	0.71
Wichita	44,703	894.06	373	0.84
Winfield	6,296	125.92	17	0.27
Derby	4,799	95.98	55	1.15
Haysville	3,082	61.64	7	0.23
Kansas Totals	404,642	8,092.84	3,500	0.85

Table 2

1980-81 Prevalence of B.D. Students in Metropolitan and Rural
Areas in Nebraska and Kansas

	School Age Population	Percent of School Age Population	Number of Identified B.D.	Percent of Identified B.D. Students	Prevalence Rate of B.D. in %
<u>Kansas Total</u>	399,000	100.0%	3,554	100.0%	.89%
Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita*	101,610	25.5%	1,167	32.8%	1.15%
Remainder of Districts	297,390	74.5%	2,387	67.2%	.80%
<u>Nebraska Total</u>	320,387	100.0%	1,555	100.0%	.49%
Omaha and Lincoln*	70,176	21.9%	1,014	65.2%	1.44%
Remainder of Districts	250,211	78.1%	541	34.8%	.16%

*Does not include entire metropolitan areas.

but also attract deviance (Faris and Dunham, 1939). Areas with more apparent social structure and where there is greater familiarity among members of a community experience lower levels of deviant behavior. In rural areas there may also be a greater reluctance to refer problem children and a greater sense of self-sufficiency in handling children's problems.

However, adequacy of existing screening procedures in rural areas may be an additional factor in the under-identification. If children are not referred, they will never be included in the identified population. Models for screening adaptable for use in rural areas have been suggested (e.g., Schultz, Manton, & Salvia, 1972). Yet while systematic screening procedures utilizing behavior ratings of students or a combination of information from a variety of sources may be used, most screening for behavioral disorders still takes the form of teacher referral. Consequently, a major reason for lack of referrals leading to identification of BI students in rural areas is probably lack of programs. Many regular classroom teachers, parents, and others who are possible referrers do not consider referring problem students because they do not know that special education services should be available for such children, because they are not encouraged to refer children for programs, or programs simply do not exist. Without established programs with trained professionals it is

unlikely people will make efforts to screen for behavior problems.

Service Delivery Models

Rural areas are faced with difficulties in delivering services to behaviorally impaired students who may be distributed over large geographical areas that are not encountered in urban areas. For this reason, in rural areas, it has been more difficult to implement a continuum of services model to meet the least restrictive environment requirement of P.L. 94-142. The implication of the Continuum or Cascade of Services Model (Reynolds, 1962; Deno, 1970) is that different kinds of programs ranging from consultation with regular classroom teachers for mildly BI students to residential/institutional programs for seriously disturbed students should exist. Some recent research has questioned the existence of a true Cascade Model consisting of discrete levels of service delivery for BI students (Peterson, Zabel, Smith, & White, Reference Note 1). The avowed model of service delivery may actually not be a good predictor of such things as the severity of students' handicaps, the ways teachers use their time, or even the amount of student integration into regular programs. One of the reasons for this may be that a variety of program levels may often not actually exist.

Even in metropolitan areas not faced with the geographical distribution problem which presents difficulties for grouping of students, a true continuum does not always exist. Programs

for behaviorally impaired students traditionally have been "pull-out" programs -- usually self-contained classrooms. In recent years resource, and consulting teacher model have been increasingly utilized, yet self-contained and even special school are still the "treatments of choice." Certainly, in rural areas, the likelihood of the existence of a true "Cascade of Services" for behaviorally impaired students is not great. Rather, it is typical for only a single level of service to be available, if even that.

In rural areas, by and large programs for BI students have been slow in coming. This may be partly due to the greater reluctance to refer children, the view that behavioral problems require other kinds of solutions, and the lack of awareness of the nature of behavioral disorders and techniques for dealing with them may be additional factors. However, the implications of geographical distribution of students plays a major role. Also, the later development of models that are especially amenable to rural areas has also probably contributed to the pace of program development.

In Kansas and Nebraska, resource, consulting and even itinerant models are most frequently used in rural areas. It could be argued that the primary reason for utilizing these models is not that the students are mostly of the mild/moderate variety, thus requiring only indirect or part-time services, but that such models are most "cost effective" -- fewer staff

can cover the greatest territory. Time and expense of transporting students to self-contained classrooms or special schools are viewed as prohibitive compared with the costs of sending teachers to work with kids or with their teachers. Additionally, these models may be appropriate for serving some BI students, e.g., those who can be maintained primarily in regular classrooms with regular support.

Are there, however, problems with these delivery models in rural settings in addition to the advantages of serving children efficiently? The major limitation exists when these part-time and indirect service models are the only programs available -- when convenience of service delivery is the determinant of delivery model rather than the individual needs of BI students. For most students, the individual attention from an itinerant a few hours each week or so, may not be sufficient. BI students rarely schedule displays of emotional and behavioral problems to correspond with an itinerant teacher's schedule. Some students cannot be maintained in the regular classroom even with consultation and support provided to the regular classroom teachers. For some students, even the regularly scheduled hour or two each day with a resource teacher may be insufficient. For many BI students a more total, therapeutic environment outside of the regular classroom is desirable.

Teacher Selection and Training

These programs may not only

be inappropriate for meeting some students' needs, but may contribute to problems for teachers as well. In a recent study of burnout among teachers of exceptional children in Kansas (Zabel & Zabel, Reference Note 2) teachers operating in the consulting role were found to score higher on measures of burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment) than teachers operating in other delivery models. There are a number of possible reasons for the high level of occupational stress experienced by such teachers. One of these, is precisely the primary justification for consulting programs--coverage of large geographical areas. Consulting teachers (and itinerant teachers) typically experience a good deal of "windshield" time traveling from student to student. In a sense, consulting teachers are homeless; they do not have the identity that comes with being based in a school or even a community. They also are faced with multiple constituencies, including regular teachers, students, and administrators.

Furthermore, consulting teachers typically have not been trained in consultation skills. Few teacher training programs address this area of competency, and state certification requirements rarely require specific types of training to operate in particular delivery models. In Kansas, for example, it is possible for a person with no regular or special education experience to obtain a provi-

sional certificate to teach BI students by completing 6 credit hours of prescribed course work and a practicum. While this minimal training is suspect even for teachers in residential, special school or self-contained settings, at least some other support may be available for teachers in those roles. This minimal preparation is doubly suspect for the consulting or resource teacher. What are the chances that such a person will be viewed as a specialist with something to offer the regular classroom teacher who may have years of training and experience? How will a teacher understand the regular program where students are encountering problems? What are the chances that such a teacher will actually have consultation to offer, let alone even know how to consult with teachers? Having an inadequately trained teacher may be worse than no teacher at all, because it provides the illusion that something is being done, it invites suspicion regarding the value of special education, and it may even be damaging to the ultimate clients, the students themselves.

This discussion describes a rather bleak picture for delivery of special educational services to BI students in rural areas. Certainly there are resource and consulting models that are working well, where trained and competent teachers provide programs that benefit BI students. Nevertheless, in many cases, the problems we have discussed seem to be more typical.

Possible Solutions: Selection and Teacher Training

What are some solutions to these problems of service delivery in rural areas? The itinerant role, as discussed earlier, may simply not be an appropriate model for BI students, and certainly is unacceptable as the sole delivery model. Other models, particularly when they are in the context of a range of legitimate options available for BI students, can work better than they often do.

Among approaches to remediating current situations, special training should be required for teachers who will operate as consulting or resource teachers in rural areas. Training in the consultation process itself and practice in successful consulting and resource programs should be required for state teacher certification and provided by teacher training institutions. It is also reasonable to expect that consulting teachers have regular classroom teaching experience. While the understanding and skills of all teachers of behaviorally impaired students would no doubt be enhanced by regular classroom teaching experience, it is crucial for consulting and resource teachers to have knowledge of what goes on in regular classrooms and to have any credence with regular classroom teachers.

At present our teacher training institutions are pressured by special education directors and the state departments of education to produce minimally trained teachers who may not be prepared for the demands of their jobs.

In the study of burnout mentioned above, younger, less experienced teachers of exceptional children were found to experience significantly greater emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in their jobs -- to be more burned out -- than older, more experienced teachers. Yet many teachers of exceptional children are young and relatively inexperienced. In our study 44.6 percent were less than 30 years of age. 47.9 percent had had no regular teaching experience, and 54.9 percent had four or fewer years of special education teaching experience.

In Kansas for the past several years state traineeships have been available in the summers to encourage teachers to acquire the basic provisional BD certification. When teacher training institutions have been reluctant to claim that such minimal training is sufficient, they have been criticized for producing insufficient numbers of competent BD teachers. It may be that the younger, less experienced teachers may simply not survive. Given the high degrees of occupational stress that teachers, especially those in consulting roles experience, it appears clear that as long as minimal training, lack of experience, and perhaps inappropriate types of training are provided, we will face continued high levels of burnout and attrition in rural areas. In effect, the low standards for preparation and certification may not result in greater numbers of qualified professionals, but actually in smaller numbers of

less qualified teachers.

An additional factor contributing to shortages of personnel in rural areas is that they are not always viewed as highly attractive locations for living by many teachers. Distance from families, friends, availability of transportation, cultural, and entertainment opportunities are probably factors. Consequently, it would seem that competent, interested regular classroom teachers indigenous to rural areas should be identified and encouraged by local administrators to obtain training as teachers of behaviorally impaired students. To do this would probably require certain incentives. Among incentives that local districts could provide, would be sabbaticals for training, tuition compensation for coursework and other expenses, additional salary, and other perquisites such as opportunities to attend professional conferences and meetings. At present, severe shortages of trained BI teachers often exist in rural areas which are given as reasons for not providing services. This partly results from discouragement of local recruits due to burdens that are placed upon capable teachers who might otherwise be interested. Why should a teacher, already underpaid and overworked take on the demands upon his/her time and financial resources? School districts benefit from the skills that trained BI teachers provide, they meet legal mandates, and they are typically financially reimbursed for part of each certified teachers' salary. Teachers

themselves acquire new skills and perhaps degrees by participating in advanced training, but typically bear the financial burden as well as the demands on time. Financial rewards may not be the primary motivator for choosing a career in special education, but they may provide additional attractions for entering the field and for staying in a particular location.

The importance of selecting already successful local teachers would also have several advantages over recruiting inexperienced outsiders. They should, in a sense, "know the territory" and probably be more likely to remain in the community or area. If carefully selected for their apparent ability to work with exceptional children and for good communication skills and relationships with other teachers, the lines of communication so essential to the success of consulting and resource programs should already exist.

Additionally, teacher training institutions serving rural areas should perhaps become more innovative in training of personnel for these areas. Arranging programs so that teachers can receive training during summers, semesters, and year long leaves of absence could also be arranged. Cooperative programming with professionals in rural areas may be necessary, with the offering of some coursework and certainly practicum experiences in those areas. There are, however, limitations on what can be accomplished in off campus sites. They must be

accessible to populations large enough to justify the offerings, and faculty must be adequately compensated for their efforts. Some training requiring libraries, media, and other materials are also limited in off-campus sites. Where off-campus work is provided every effort must be made to provide consistent, unfragmented, sequentially warranted training. Our experience indicates that University faculty are subject to the same consequences of traveling as consulting teachers. Positions including substantial off-campus travel are frequently viewed as less desirable and may contribute to faculty leaving such training programs. Other delivery systems, such as use of video or audio broadcasting may also be possible, at least for some of the general or introductory coursework. At Kansas State University, for example, a number of special education courses have been offered over the Regents' Telenetwork, an audio, two way communication system tying together about 25 sites around the state. While, this can be an efficient delivery model to rural areas, our experience indicates some limitations both from the instructors' and students' perspectives.

Summary

Problems of providing special education for behaviorally impaired students in rural areas involves the interrelated factors of identification of students, service delivery models, training, selection, and retention of

teachers. Difficulties in each of these areas is both a reflection of, and contributor to, difficulties in each of the others. If BI students are to be identified, appropriate kinds of programs provided, and competent teachers employed, teachers must be carefully selected, and adequately trained, and sufficiently rewarded.

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A Series of Reactions

A Reaction by:

Charles Doyle, Director of
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Jim Fruehling, Consultant
to B.I. Program
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Beatrice, Nebraska

As you are certainly aware, our situation here at the Educational Service Unit is somewhat unique in the state. Drawing our students, on contract, from a large geographical area involves certain problems which may be inherent only in our particular situation. In any case, the following issues appear significant to us, functioning as we do as the "most restrictive environment" in which public schools services are available to Behaviorally Impaired students - at least in this area. Our concerns, therefore, may not be universal, but appear significant to us, given the context in which we must provide programming.

First of all, residential considerations have become a factor: One of our students comes from a town more than fifty miles distant, one way. Other students are unable to tolerate lengthy bus rides, and have become disruptive while being transported. For the one student, the cost of a five day a week foster placement is being reimbursed through the State Department, Special Education Branch. For other parents who would consider such a five day

placement, but who live within fifty miles of the BI program, however, little recourse is available other than to file a "Dependency petition" with the Department of Welfare in order to pay for foster care. Though this is a "no fault" measure, many parents would be understandably reluctant to follow through on such an action. Another procedure, "specialized foster care," is typically available only to children who are wards of the state. We also realize that exceptions can be made by the State Department, Special Education Branch, in cases that require crisis intervention.

Even in the event of a "crisis" situation at home, parents will find their options limited. There is a psychiatric treatment unit in one of our local community hospitals, but the emphasis there is on short-term treatment of chronic adults during periodic exacerbations. Further, the physical accommodations and staffing patterns are not highly suited to active children. We have also found that the public Regional Centers do not admit children younger than thirteen years of age. Rather, the Centers refer to psychiatric in-patient programs in Lincoln and Omaha hospitals. These programs, of course, emphasize a medical model, are at a distance of one to two hundred miles from the home, and are very costly.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that we become involved in issues which perhaps do not

relate directly to educational programming. Nevertheless, the extent and quality of our programming will be moot issues if the family structure or logistical considerations impede the student's access to that program. Accordingly, given the nature of our program, there is a need for home-school liaison staff. Such a person can function to coordinate with the home school district, the parents, various community health and psychological agencies, and the Service Unit. The need for such a person is even more pressing when one considers that certain of our school districts have no resident superintendent, principal, or guidance counselor. The home-school liaison can serve not only a programmatic function, but can also provide reassurance and emotional support to parents whose previous contacts with school agencies have often been quite negative.

We have also found that the student's free time, at home, can result in behaviors which perpetuate negative community attitudes, and which can militate against the energetic efforts required to mainstream the student successfully. Again, facilities for leisure time activities at home may be quite limited, as our students may come from a village where there is no pool, no YMCA, no bowling alley, no movies, and perhaps not even much side-walk on which to roller-skate! Accordingly, we've employed a Recreational Therapist to help enlarge the students' repertoires of adaptive leisure time activities: The Recre-

ational Therapist plans group activities for P.E. as well, and may, in the future, become somewhat more involved in working with families to ascertain what types of leisure activities the family could encourage and support.

Another need which we are perceiving is for "reserve personnel", who can not only substitute effectively within the self-contained B.I. classroom but who could also provide a "presence" in the mainstreamed classroom, at least for a brief period of time, once the student has returned to the home school. Though certainly well-trained, degreed, experienced personnel would be optimal, it would appear that paraprofessional staff could function well in such a capacity. Training for them could perhaps include examination of the I.E.P. process, objectives and accountability; crisis management and liability issues; positive reinforcement programs and "exchangeable" reinforcers; and active listening.

The need for such personnel is more acute because our mainstreaming must typically occur within an "all-day" context. With the distances involved, we cannot include the student in home school activities during the middle of the school day and bus the student to and from the public school, returning to the BI program. Arrangements for special drivers and vans would be most difficult to support from the standpoint of cost effectiveness, nor would an increase in transportation time - during the school day - seem beneficial

for the student.

There is, therefore, a need for personnel who can become well acquainted with and credible to the student, while in the self-contained program, subsequently accompanying the student into the home school. Such personnel could provide valuable information and support to the regular classroom teachers, many of whom find it impossible to come to the BI program for the desirable amount of observation and interaction, prior to the mainstreaming of the student. After a designated interval, the resource personnel already in the public school could, if possible, move to provide the necessary support to the classroom teacher, as the itinerant personnel are "faded."

Because such personnel are not presently available, and because the needs of our current students appear to be met effectively by doing so, we have arranged our self-contained program into two rooms, to provide a "continuum", of sorts. In the second room, the staff-student ratio is slightly lower, the classroom routine somewhat less teacher-structured, and the reinforcement dispensed more intermittently. Thus, we are attempting to approximate conditions in the mainstreamed classroom, and minimize the adjustment the student will have to make.

However, this still begs the issue of providing the necessary support to home school staff once they receive the student in the classroom. From our standpoint, it would appear that this deficit

is the most crucial one to be resolved if students are to be successfully mainstreamed. In fact, this issue may largely determine whether or not home school staff are even willing to have the process initiated. Because of the distances involved, it becomes most difficult to have home school faculty participating in, or observing, the BI classrooms with any regularity at all. Contact between the self-contained classroom and the home school, therefore, is often limited to phone calls and correspondence. At this point, we are endeavoring to ascertain just what type of feedback the home schools desire: often, the reporting of grades and objective data towards the fulfillment of objectives doesn't seem to meet the expectations of the home school. Training of home school staff regarding behavioral programming, conflict management, dealing with parents, etc., is also often lacking, and cannot be supplied with the intensity and frequency which is desirable: the training process is complicated by the fact that certain of the districts do not have regular access to video tape equipment. Thus, much of the training must be delivered directly, staff to staff. Attitudinal changes, as one might suspect, are also difficult to facilitate without adequate support. We are constantly endeavoring to communicate the fact that instant successes or "cures" are not forthcoming for behaviorally impaired students.

Rather, we stress that our own classroom management involves ongoing feedback and evaluation, and that techniques which have not proven successful with a particular student can be analyzed, revised, or discarded. Convincing the home school staff to adopt a similar procedure, and convincing them that this procedure is problem-solving, not "failure", requires a highly developed, intensive system of support.

We feel that a possible solution for finding and retaining quality staff for rural settings lies in the ability of universities and small colleges to recruit and train individuals who are willing to relocate to non-metropolitan settings and have the skills to function as a part of a team concept that would include other specialists as well as the paraprofessional.

We also feel that any program developed for a non-metropolitan setting needs to have a cadre of personnel such as those we had indicated as a necessary part of our project to insure success. The issue of compensation and other fringe benefits needs to be worked out on an individual basis, but taking into account the pay and other fringe benefits being received by other professionals providing a similar level of services.

Again, thanks for the chance to respond to your paper. These considerations may be unique to our particular situation, but may also be germane to a wider variety of settings.

A Reaction by:

Heidi Goodenkauf
Secondary Resource Teacher
Weeping Water Public Schools
Weeping Water, Nebraska

Zabel and Peterson more than adequately identified the multitude of problems facing rural programs for Behaviorally Impaired students. However, there are several facets of identification, service delivery models and teacher training that could be expanded.

First, in the area of identification, many students tend to be misidentified into other categories. If one checks the statistics for Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) students versus other handicapping conditions, one finds that the numbers of SLD students vastly outnumber other handicapping conditions (with the exception of speech and hearing impaired). While Zabel and Peterson state that limited programming for BI youngsters is one reason for small numbers of identified students, they need to dig further. The main service for special students in a rural setting tends to be a multi-handicapped unit such as a resource room. Thus, all types of handicapping conditions are served in one program. Because psychologists are aware of the negative connotations of the BI label, and because many feel they have inadequate data to support labeling a child BI, they opt for the SLD label instead. This allows the child to legally obtain

special services. The administrators are satisfied because they receive federal funds and parents are often happier because it is less threatening to have a child with a learning disability than a child who is emotionally disturbed. Consequently, BI students do exist in rural schools, often in greater numbers than statistics indicate. Often they are hidden behind another label or not identified at all. If students remain unidentified, it is because of the reasons Zabel and Peterson state in their paper. Administrators are afraid that if students are identified as BI and no program exists, they will be forced to form a new program with great expense to the school system. Therefore, they put pressure on teachers NOT to identify these students. Parents, afraid of the negative connotations on their child and family, often refuse diagnosis, and if diagnosed, will refuse treatment. They feel that in a small rural town, people will find out something is wrong with their child.

The second part of Zabel and Peterson's paper dealt with Delivery Models and Services. It is true that the basic model for special services in a rural setting is the Resource Room. This program is designed to handle all handicapping conditions and is probably economically the best suited model for the rural setting. However, for the BI student who needs the structure of a full time self-contained program, the model is inadequate. In fact, due to scheduling conflicts, it

is almost impossible for a resource teacher to provide any of the more self-contained levels of Deno's cascade of services.

There is also the problem that rural schools do not have access to places that provide these types of services. While there are many diagnostic centers in Nebraska, there are few long term residential treatment centers. And, even if a student is referred for diagnosis, often all that is received is a written report on the findings and the center's recommendations for programming. No consideration is given to the types of qualified personnel in the school system or the physical setting in the school system. No follow-up personnel are sent to the school to help implement the programming suggestions or evaluate their effectiveness.

The statement that many resource teachers lack consulting skills may be slightly erroneous. The resource teacher program at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln deals quite extensively in consulting skills. The problem is that these skills tend to revolve around a background in learning disabilities and curriculum adaptations. Many resource teachers feel that they do not have an adequate background in the variety of educational therapies needed in dealing with BI students. While resource teachers feel they have an adequate background in behavior modification techniques, this is only one type of therapy used in dealing with BI students in the classroom. Other therapies such

as Nondirective Group Therapy, Rational-Cognitive Therapy, Life-Space Interview, Crisis Intervention and a variety of art, drama and music therapies are beyond the training of the average resource teacher.

Even if one does have training in these areas, implementing them in the resource room is difficult. Teachers and administrators stress the academics of the classroom. Therefore, pressure is put on the resource teacher to keep these children working at grade level. Consequently, there is little time left in the schedule for a class meeting to help a child work through his problems.

The final issue addressing teacher training and the problem of burnout. Perhaps, the real problem is not burnout itself, but the ability to rekindle. People often experience low points in their lives. Teachers are no exception. What is needed is a support system that allows teachers to redevelop a positive self-image of themselves and their jobs.

Many rural resource teachers are the only special educators in their systems. Consequently, the support and recognition from colleagues and administrators is lacking. Instead, special educators are expected to carry the same extra duty and sponsorship load as the rest of the staff. It can be extremely exhausting to have a desk thrown at you during the day and then ride 80 miles to the basketball game with the

cheerleaders that same night, only to come home and finish writing 20 individual math cards for the next day's lesson.

There is the need to be with other BI teachers and resource teachers to discuss the commonality of these problems. At the same time, specific training in the area of behavior disorders and educational therapy can be given at the time of such gathering. The problem of such meetings is the time and expense to the teacher. Not only do administrators need to be enlightened in such areas, but so do local school board members. Local school boards are responsible for the negotiated agreement, which determines such items as salary, sabbatical leave, professional leave, and reimbursement for expenses such as tuition and registration fees. If teachers were better compensated for BI training, perhaps more would be motivated to obtain such training, including people who had been in the system a number of years.

While there are many problems facing BI teachers in rural areas, recognition of these problems is the first major step in solving them. Zabel and Peterson's paper is the first step in the problem-solving procedure. Hopefully, more research in the area of rural programs will follow, thus enabling the BI students in rural areas to receive an appropriate education.

A Reaction by:

Martin Koolen
 Director of Special Education
 ESU #2
 Fremont, Nebraska

The definition of "Rural Schools" as it is used in the context of this paper may need clarification. Rural states are quite different in what they consider to be rural. In Nebraska rural means one room school, K-8; while in Iowa rural means a consolidated K-12 school system.

I'm bothered by the term "minimally trained." I don't know what this means in this context. Therefore, I'm reluctant to comment on your text as it relates to minimal training and burnout, for example. However, I am of the opinion (as are other veterans on my staff) that whether minimally or maximally trained, young or old, inexperienced or experienced, the critical factor is whether the BI teacher "survives" or not is the personality make-up of that teacher. Two of the recognized expert classroom teachers of BI students in this state, started out with virtually no specific training as BI teachers. They happened to be secure, mature, capable, regular classroom teachers that were given "on the job" training, so to speak, and continued to grow from there through ongoing in-service opportunities. I'm wondering whether the key isn't to identify these types and give them the "minimal"

training that they would need in order to work with BI students and then support them with continuous in-service experiences. I'm concerned that asking a teacher to take on a rigorous, "maximum" training program before actually experiencing the realities of sole classroom responsibility may result in tremendous time, effort and money lost if that person does not "survive."

While admittedly not particularly feasible due to likely difficulties with job transiency as well as other problems, I feel that the best way to insure survival of the young, inexperienced BI teacher would be to assign each graduate with a "transition co-teacher" for the first year of teaching. Such co-teachers would be experienced, "Master Teacher" types who would spend a given time co-teaching on a rotating basis with the new graduates for which they were responsible. These co-teachers then become the contact person whenever problems arise for the new graduate. Such "Master Teachers" would have to be willing to live in a transient condition as they moved from town to town to co-teach with the new graduates in their assigned school systems. And there's the rub, folks! Finding qualified people to take on such a role would be next to impossible. One possibility might be to have the person work out of a university or college setting, but have the cost shared by the school districts which hire the graduates. Those school districts would then claim reimbursement from the State for excess cost. I really

believe that such immediate, on-the-scene teaching assistance in the home school setting would do more to prepare the new graduate for "survival" than anything else.

A Reaction by:

William H. Marshall
Director of Special Education
McCook Public Schools
McCook, Nebraska

This paper has quite accurately and succinctly identified the major concerns and issues related to services for behaviorally impaired students in rural areas. My reactions will be drawn from my experiences as a resource teacher, Department of Education Consultant, and a Special Education Administrator.

I. Lack of referral and identification.

The major reasons listed were; (a) lack of knowledge of services, (b) not encouraged to refer, (c) programs do not exist so why refer.

My experience with various levels of school staff is that a significant percentage do not recognize BI as a handicapping condition, and as such, eligible for special education services. Lack of existing programs for referral and identification is true even of diagnostic staff, even though they have been told that referral/identification is

an initial step in program development.

Many educators in rural Nebraska are still suffering a hangover from the E.D. terminology. Diagnosticians in the past were reluctant to identify under the prior medical definition. Another factor, especially at the secondary level, is a lack of sophistication and knowledge. Instead of referring and looking for alternatives, the typical response is some form of exclusion.

I would agree that the incidence level probably is somewhat smaller in rural areas due to several factors; (a) closer attention to students and articulation between school and home, (b) less tolerance for deviancy in a rural setting, (c) predominance of middle class society which tends to be closely involved with children's activities.

II. Lack of program development.

Even though referral and identification is a primary ingredient for program development other significant factors appear to contribute to the lack of BI programs in rural areas. These are not listed in priority.

A. Level of administration in local districts to serving BI students in a specifically designed program.

In most of rural Nebraska one person handles the administration of special education. If this administrator has no background in BI or if this is not a high priority item in the district it is "put on the back burner." Also, rural districts are still

in the process of developing other programs: secondary vocational programs, SLD, pre-school, severe/profound, are programs which have been started or are more visible than BI. The district's energy is aimed at these.

Most of rural Nebraska does not have the levels of administration and supervisory staff to focus directly on BI. Unless an Educational Service Unit or a cooperative program is handling special education programs, the smaller district does not have the structure available to assign a supervisor for development of BI.

B. Ecological factors.

To effectively serve the BI student other agencies such as community mental health programs must be involved for counseling and support beyond the school day. These have either been non-existent, ineffective or too expensive for effective service delivery. When mental health centers have been operative in local areas they have often been staffed by professionals unacquainted with or working at cross purposes to the educational structure. Even though mental health services are established on an ability to pay scale, this has still been a deterrent to some families.

C. Geography/distance.

Transporting students to a level II program is often prohibitive. This is additionally confounding when intergration with peers from the normal environment should be part of the program.

D. Generic programming.

The alternative to transporting students for self-contained classes is to have a generic special educator within each small school to serve a combination of the mildly handicapped. The availability of teachers with skills to serve BI students is very limited. For obvious reasons rural areas employ the new/inexperienced, and often a less qualified teacher.

E. Level of involvement with the State Department of Education.

The current function of staff from the Special Education Section of the State Department is more compliance oriented than consultative. A critical component in statewide program development is leadership from a state agency (such as we are seeing from your project). The local district, or ESU needs stimulation and direction from a higher educational strata to assist with new programming. Assistance from an individual or group from an agency with authority having a singular objective and directive is vital to foster and initiate new programs.

III. Persons/groups responsible as change agents.

I believe all of the following must take partial responsibility to affect this situation:

A. Local Administrators, Directors of Special Education.

B. University/teacher training Institution.

C. State Department/State Board of Education/Special

Education Advisory Council.

D. State/local organizations (Council for Exceptional Children, Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors, Nebraska Council for Children with Behavior Disorders).

IV. Recommendations.

The following recommendations may be useful:

A. Development of a state-wide master plan through the State Board of Education for a service delivery model for BI.

B. Regional workshops from awareness to program development for BI programs done by University, State Department, and Local districts.

C. Increased consultative services from the State Department of Education.

D. Consideration of Compliance aspect of Nebraska Special Education Regulations.

The Department of Education may analyze allocation of special education personnel on a geographic or regional basis. Following such analysis, school districts may be required to show cause as to the continued operation of certain programs or to justify the absence of certain programs. (Rule 51-3.65)

With our system of small districts in Nebraska, program development is a laborious process, and no processes can be implemented to quickly and expeditiously facilitate change. A total cooperative effort is necessary, unless an agency such as ESU's are mandated to carry out such a charge.

A Reaction by:

Nancy Olson
Teacher
Marshall-Nemaha County
Educational Services Coop
Seneca, Kansas

I feel there are at best three possible reasons for low referral of behaviorally disordered students:

1. Family and Community - I feel the greatest factor in the discrepancy between rural and urban students can be traced to environment. All of the PSA students I see are from broken homes and have had traumas in their lives between the age of 0-5. What is the rural divorce rate as compared to the urban? How many extended families (grandparents, aunts, and uncles living near by) take the responsibility for children in the rural area as compared to the urban area? In rural areas not only the family takes responsibility for its children, but so does the community. The close-knit community ties, family oriented community activities, and neighbor-helping-neighbor attitude does make a difference. There are approximately 75 people working on our regular and special education staff; I can only think of 2 who have gone through divorce. This is not even close to the national norms of 1 in 4.

2. Children's leisure time - In rural areas children's leisure time is spent differently than

many urban children. We simply don't have as many things to get into without being noticed. Getting lost in the crowd and into trouble when you are quite young is difficult in a community of 3,000. On the farm with mom, dad, and siblings, the chances are decreased even more.

3. Referrals and experienced personnel to handle those referrals - Students referred and experienced personnel is a problem. Painting too rosy of a picture of rural living is of course naive. I feel time and the building of teachers' confidence will help. I feel even stronger that our principals need better educating. It is the principal to whom the teacher is discussing Johnnie's behavior problems. A principal told me last year, "I have a student who I think had a nervous breakdown last week, but I don't think it's an emotional problem." Administrators are not required to study or discuss the characteristics of various handicaps. They are trained in their responsibility to the law in respect to handicapped children. Our universities are not recognizing administrators as part of the team that identifies and assists in the placement of children in special programs. The administrator sits at the staffing and has to try to act like an authority. If he did not obtain his teaching certificate in the last 5 years, or leave the teaching ranks just recently, he did not even take the "Exceptional Child in the Classroom" course. It is not required for

administrators. Yet, they are responsible for the referral and must sign for a student to go into a program.

Universities could also help in educating teachers better in the exceptional child and P.L. 94-142. Teachers know a child has a problem, but don't know how to even describe it. It is grossly unfair to teachers to sit in a college classroom and discuss theory and history of these disorders - and not how to handle them. Give teachers confidence in working with the child and specialist. Everyone will benefit.

I really agree with the paper when it comes to education of the consultant. All we do is give special education less credibility when we send out teachers to consult who have less background than those who are asking for the help.

I feel our delivery model is working. When it comes to getting teachers to rural areas, I agree that local teachers should be recruited. In our office, nine specialists are based, I and one other are the only ones with no local family ties here. I have lived here 12 years. The others will most probably live here all their lives. Every one of them are experienced and work hard to serve a community they care about. They all range in age from about 27 to 40. They have a lot of years of good service ahead of them. Being together in one office does give a "home" and sense of belonging. This atmosphere has been very important in the morale of our

people. If one person has a bad day or week, someone is always around to listen, understand and support. This extends to after school bridge playing, partying, and other activities that make you feel part of the group. This type of office is usually only in urban areas.

Another big plus of creating rural collective offices for consultants and itinerant teachers is the exchange of ideas. I taught for a number of years with no other special education personnel for miles. I would try and discuss problems with other teachers - they did not understand or have ideas to help. I felt stagnant. If anything, regular education thought I had it easy because I only had 13 EMR-TMR students (ages 6 to 17) and later only 3 to 5 at a time (an L.D. caseload of 30).

A Reaction by:

Judy Preuss, Ph.D.
Assoc. Professor of Education
Concordia College
Seward, Nebraska

The Peterson/Zabel paper presents a good overview of the present status of programming for the behaviorally impaired student in Nebraska and Kansas. The overview is clear and concise. Issues concerning the education of behaviorally impaired students are brought into sharp focus. This is helpful in analyzing the current "state of the art" in

Nebraska and Kansas. The issues discussed; program availability, attraction of qualified teachers to rural areas and the matter of prevalence are problems generic to all areas of special education. These issues are not unique to the field of education for the behaviorally impaired.

These generic issues are important as they effect the entire field of education for exceptional students - gifted as well as handicapped. Appropriate identification is crucial to student school success in any program. When students are identified as needing a special program, the issue of program availability is raised. Teachers and school administrators are not likely to search for students for whom no program exists. Conversely they are not going to design and develop programs without a population to serve. Which should come first student identification to justify program existence or program existence to facilitate appropriate student identification?

Program delivery system models dictate specific teacher roles. The identification of appropriate teacher roles within the delivery system models is as crucial an issue as is the appropriate identification of students. Also involved here is the development of teacher support systems to improve teacher effectiveness and increase longevity in the teaching of behaviorally impaired students. This support system could conceivably begin with upgraded pre-service training and continue through on-the-job supports such

as in-service, course work, group study, teacher centers and a buddy system.

State departments of education operate with specific program certification standards. In Nebraska these standards are written by the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education and presented to the State Board of Education for final approval. These standards represent minimal requirements for training programs. The State Department of Education in no way encourages the minimal training of teachers but supplies standards to be used by training institutions as basic guides upon which to build programs. Within the state of Nebraska certification standards allow for some program flexibility between institutions of higher education as well as maintaining institutional integrity in program development. Without this arrangement the state would dictate training programs. Standards for training are necessary, however the upgrading of these standards will not guarantee more qualified teachers and eliminate the problems of teacher burnout. There are other aspects to the teacher burnout issue than simply modifying training programs. These other factors include, as previously mentioned, the development of a support system and appropriate role determinations for teachers of the behaviorally impaired.

The issues raised by Peterson and Zabel are critical to the improvement of services to behaviorally impaired students. These issues are also inter-

related. Advancement or problems in each of these areas contributes to progress or lack thereof in the other areas. The interrelatedness of the issues complicates the selection of appropriate alternative solutions.

A Reaction by:

Dorothy Rockefeller
Director of Special Education
Kaw Valley Spec. Ed. Coop
St. Marys, Kansas

I definitely feel that many "old time" teachers do not make referrals for BD students based on three major reasons:

1) All students in their room are their responsibility and to refer would indicate a weakness.

2) The teacher feels threatened to have the necessary personnel in the classroom doing observations, collecting data, etc..

3) If instant "cure" does not come about, then the referral was in vain.

However, I feel in some instances over-referral is coming about. Anyone who has a discipline problem is referred. In contrast many who are BD students are overlooked because they do not have acting out behavior.

Time spent screening and doing comprehensive evaluations on students who are discipline problems take valuable time which

could be spent identifying the withdrawn BD students, who the teachers tend to overlook or certainly do not refer.

It seems to me a consideration of how to disseminate pertinent information to regular classroom teachers is another problem that needs to be considered.

Selection of already successful teachers in a district to become teachers of BD is an excellent suggestion especially if a consultant model is to be followed. I feel the success I had as a PSA consultant in a rural area resulted largely from the credibility that was already established through years of successful teaching in the area in which I served as a consultant. However, districts must offer incentives (as mentioned in the paper) in order to attract and keep these teachers in the BD area.

A Reaction by:

Jack Rockefeller
Classroom Teacher
Clay Center Jr. High
Clay Center, Kansas

You have certainly zeroed in on the key problems of the way BD kids are dealt with in a rural area. From a "longtime" classroom teacher's view point your assessment of the PSA consultant strikes home. In most cases the consultants are inexperienced (in the classroom) and under-trained and being used primarily by the school district as "window dressing" in order to meet the mandate. As a long time classroom teacher I realize I may be overcritical and must admit ignorance of outcomes and results of the program.

I might add that the latter is probably another major cause for some of the "oldtimers" skepticism. How can you appreciate a program when you are not apprised of the results?